

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge that they did not identify support for the claim amendments made on July 21, 2003. Support for the amendments is found on page 29, lines 18-21, which refers to the title, body, and header of the message as follows.

Also, the location of keywords is not to be restricted to the title of a message but alternatively, they can be inserted to the body of a message or added as part of the header of a message.

The claims have been further amended to more clearly distinguish the present invention over the cited references, as will be explained. Support for the present amendments is found, for example, in Fig. 1 and its description.

Applicants previously explained that one patentable distinction in this case is that key information is contained in the title or body of the message in the present invention and Wang establishes priority as part of an e-mail address, in the header of the message. The examiner apparently recognizes this distinction, but is not persuaded that the distinction is patentable. In an effort to expedite prosecution, the claims have been amended to further recite, among other things, a key word look-up table that associates predefined key words with handler programs. The key words represent a characteristic of the e-mail messages, such as worthiness or urgency. For these reasons, applicants continue to traverse the rejection of claims 1-7 on the basis of Wang and Beck.

Neither cited reference discloses the first patentable feature of the present

invention, i.e., key information in the header or body of a message. This alone is strong evidence of non-obviousness. Moreover, there is no suggestion to combine the cited references. After all, the two references do not even relate to the same field. Wang relates to message processing, where Beck relates to cache memory allocation. Thus, Beck does not relate to field of the present invention, either, as explained in detail in Response A, mailed January 31, 2003.

The examiner rejected applicant's arguments (paper No. 7), arguing, for example, that "the test for obviousness is not whether the features of a secondary reference may be bodily incorporated into the structure of the primary reference." While not the test for obviousness per se, that analysis is relevant to the obviousness inquiry, and in this case it is strong evidence of non-obviousness that must be considered.

There is also no motivation to modify the references to obtain the claimed invention, by moving the key information from the address to the title or body of the message. These message components perform different functions in the messaging process, and the information in the header of Wang operates in a different way from the title or body information in the present invention. Indeed, to the extent that Wang teaches a system of prioritization of e-mails through the message address, Wang teaches away from the present invention, because Wang discloses placing key information through the header in the message, which is a different way to prioritize.

Which field the key information is actually in is not a matter of design choice,

as the examiner asserts, for several reasons. First, sending key information in the address field as Wang suggests means that the recipient is required to have many mailboxes, or instead, a plurality of alias addresses for one mailbox, since he/she has to receive e-mail messages with various address field values. Because those requirements may not always be satisfied, the address field is not a suitable place for key information.

Second, key information is supposed to be entered by the sender of e-mail messages. This means that the sender enters key information by editing the e-mail message that he/she is sending. He/she can, of course, freely edit the title and body of a message, while other header fields are normally uneditable (not entirely impossible, but he/she must use a special function of mailer software).

As can be seen from the above, which field to use for key information is not an arbitrary choice, but a meaningful decision in implementing the function of executing a handler program that is associated with a keyword in a received e-mail message.

The present amendments clarify that the apparatus of the present invention searches the title or body of a received e-mail message to find a particular keyword indicating that the message is worthy of reading or is requesting a prompt response from the recipient, and if there is such a keyword, executes a corresponding handler program identified from a keyword lookup table. Such features of the present invention are also not taught by the cited references.

In the final action (Paper No. 7, dated April 16, 2003), the examiner states that

the key information used to identify a handler program is taught in column 9, lines 45-55 of Wang. In the paragraph suggested by the examiner, Wang describes that a priority code is included as part of the e-mail address. However, this paragraph has to be interpreted in combination with the preceding paragraph (lines 29-44), which describes repackaging of e-mail messages. That is, in the Wang reference, priority codes are used to sort incoming messages, so that the local server repackages higher-priority messages for delivery to the user end when there is enough storage space in the user's e-mail device to receive all incoming messages. Note that what invokes the repackaging program (the examiner refers to this as a "priority handler") in Wang is not the key information contained in a received message, but the event indicating shortage of storage space on the client side. It should also be noted here that the repackaging program is executed not at the client (i.e., the receiving end), but at the local server (i.e., e-mail system).

In contrast to the Wang reference, the claimed program loading means disposed at the receiving end consults the keyword lookup table to load one of the handler programs that is associated with the keyword found in the received e-mail message. Further, the claimed execution means disposed at the receiving end executes the handler program (see amended claims 1 and 7). As seen from the above analysis, Wang (column 9, lines 45-55) does not teach the use of a keyword found in a received e-mail message in loading and executing an associated handler program at the receiving end.

The examiner also stated in the same final action that, while Wang did not

explicitly disclose it, the table that defines relationships between the key information and handler programs associated therewith is inherent in a system such as Wang. However, as seen from the above analysis, Wang does not teach handler programs each associated with keywords. Wang only discloses a repackaging program (priority handler) that repackages incoming messages according to their priority codes. Because priority codes are used merely in sorting e-mail messages, Wang has no need to employ a table that associates priority values with anything else. Therefore, the examiner's statement about inherency of the keyword lookup table is not justified.

The examiner further mentions interrupt handling in Wang as a technique that is similar to the table of the present invention. Applicants do not disagree that Wang implicitly has a table that associates a plurality of interrupt events with interrupt handlers. Wang actually shows several interrupt types that indicate the presence of incoming e-mail messages, such as call-back mail delivery interrupt and incoming mail delivery interrupt. Wang, however, does not show such interrupt events that are produced by the presence of keywords contained in an incoming message. Particularly, Wang shows nothing about keywords that represent worthiness of urgency of e-mail messages, which amended claims 1 and 7 recite explicitly. Therefore, the interrupt handlers of Wang do not provide sufficient teaching of the claimed program loading means or execution means.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By



Patrick G. Burns
Registration No. 29,367

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300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312.360.0080
Facsimile: 312.360.9315
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